



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## II.

# SCIENCE AND HUMANITY.

---

IN criticising the system of thought and life which Auguste Comte has propounded in his successive works, too much attention is often bestowed on subordinate details. It is in some ways inconvenient that he strove to give so great a degree of precision and minuteness to the scheme he conceived. The mind of the reader is too often drawn off by these startling novelties from the central ideas. Now, the central ideas will be found to be summed up in the two words at the head of this paper, Science and Humanity. These two watchwords imply—1. That all intellectual truths must ultimately rest on science; 2. That every impulse of human life must always converge to humanity. They who follow out these two thoughts will realize how completely positivism discards any trace of *mystical* emotion; and, again, how wide is the gulf that separates it from the irritable criticism of negation, from the destructive dogmatism of atheism.

Order and progress—live for others—are the words which Auguste Comte inscribed on the first page of the work wherein he pictured in one system the scheme of life that had been forming itself in a long course of human history—the religion of humanity.

The whole of this work of his, the “Positive Polity,”\* is but the development of the thought which is embodied in these words. What is it that they mean? It is this:

The true moving force of man’s life, individual or social, is affection: love of our kind, love of right, zeal for the good. Let us live for others, for the happiness of man is to live as a social being; let us live for self, only so far that we may live more truly for the whole, to which we belong by the very nature of man. All this is summed up in the word humanity.

\* “Politique Positive,” Paris, 4 vols., 1851. “Positive Polity,” English translation, London, Longmans & Co., 1875.

But let us remember always that this affection can not be stable, uniform, or efficient unless it have a foundation. It must stir us not only to the right things, but to the right things through the right means. And, to move us aright, it must know, or rather be guided by knowledge. Feeling, therefore, must ever rest on truth, must be in accord with facts, with all the realities around man and within man. And so, the foundation of right living is the true order, first, of the world in which we find ourselves ; next, of the society of which we are units ; lastly, of the moral nature of the human soul. And, that we may conform to these various kinds of order and live by them, and with them, we must *know* them. So knowledge is become a necessary condition of duty. All this I have summed up in the word science.

And yet again : The aim and goal of human life, individual as much as social, is improvement ; a continual rising into a higher state, a firmer morality to each of us, a purer civilization for our race. To love and desire the good, even to know how to achieve it, is not enough : we must labor for it, having as our motive, a sound heart ; as our guide, right knowledge. Thus the union of love for the good with knowledge of the true order issues finally in one end—progress : material, intellectual, moral ; increased mastery over nature, wider knowledge, purer hearts, and loftier conduct.

At last, after centuries of divided efforts, feeling, thought, and activity come to work in one harmonious whole. And the conception of humanity rises up to give each of the three a new meaning. At last we see that it is the vast human whole which is the true source and end of every social union. So we see that all we really know is, the world of law translated into the language of the human mind, and ordered for the sake of human welfare. And, lastly, it is the progress of man, and of man's earth for the sake of man, that is the noblest ideal of activity. Humanity is the embodiment of our highest love, the measure of all our knowledge, the object of our true activity. It is the source of all we have ; the master of our present lives ; the end of our hopes hereafter.

#### I.

I have used the word *religion*—a word which brings us face to face with two opposing difficulties and a crowd of ambiguities. It is said by some : “ What is the need of religion, if you take as your basis of life the entire sum of human science ? If religion is true, it is included in science ; if it is not scientific, it will make life un-

real." So argue, consciously or unconsciously, all who trust for the future of civilization to bare knowledge of real things, who distrust theology and all forms of emotional creeds.

On the other side, the objection of all who cling to theology in any of its many forms is this: "How can there be a religion, if there be no divinity? Is humanity a conception that can compare in sublimity with God? Does not the reign of law, which you take as your foundation, destroy the possibility of the infinite, of omnipotence, of absolute goodness; nay more, of will, of consciousness in a supreme being of any kind?"

It is most important to clear up what we mean by religion.

If we thought that religion were something outside of positive science, if it were merely "morality touched with emotion," if it were simply a yearning of the spirit after something or some being which we intuitively assumed to be, but of whom we really know nothing definite, or whom we deliberately take to transcend all human understanding—if religion begins and ends with the worship of a sublime but vague ideal—then we say to the skeptic, or the atheist, or the man of scientific materialism: "By all means, we will have no religion in that sense. You are right. Come what may, we will not build our house upon the sand of elastic emotion." If, as some caricaturists would pretend, positivism was designed simply to substitute for the adoration of God the adoration of transfigured man, and to stop there, then it would deserve all the contemptuous condemnation of the man of science, who takes his stand on knowledge of physical laws and rejects all religion altogether. Such a creed would make life unreal; it would be in conflict with science; it would open human life again to all the danger and confusion of giving paramount place to a principle which is ultimately an emotion devoid of conviction. For we know that each heart and each imagination would unconsciously transform and recast that principle for itself. The result would not be worth the effort. The new object of adoration would be as unreal as the old.

But we mean something widely different by religion. Religion, with Auguste Comte, means the perfect unison between man's intellectual convictions and his affective nature—both being devoted to a wisely ordered activity. When intellect, feeling, and activity are brought into a consensus, so that man's whole powers are exerted harmoniously, in accordance with his true conditions and wants, then, and not till then, man's life becomes religious. Thus there is no contrast between science and religion. Religion is sci-

ence brought to bear upon man's industry and effort at the prompting of a noble feeling. Religion is not worship barely, because it is not any emotion barely : it is emotion inspired by knowledge to action. Nor can religion have as its object anything unknown or unknowable, or vague, or ideal only. For it implies the application of the whole of human knowledge to a definite purpose, under the fusing warmth of love.

The puzzle laid before man is this : The intellect is ever at work discovering the hidden laws and relations of things. Man's noblest instincts are ever urging him to devote himself to the good ; his lower instincts are constantly urging him to devote his energy to self. His energy is ever seeking work for its hands—work—product of some kind. How these three are to work together is the problem before man. The intellect may serve bad instincts as well as good. The good instincts do not of themselves know how to find the truth. By themselves they are less vigorous than the selfish instincts. The energy is often wasted in vain efforts, and often is actively bad and destructive. With Comte, religion is the concordat, or scheme of mutual alliance whereby each of the three is brought to coöperate and do its best by the others, under the earthly limitations of man's being.

Can any man say that, in this sense, religion is superfluous, or contrary to science, or a source of unreality? All serious men, whatever their creed, of whatever school, are aiming at this. All scientific labor whatever is directed (so far as it is not vain display or dilettante trifling) to give the greatest extension and unity to science, to bring it to bear most efficiently on human thought and life. Politicians, thinkers, moralists, practical reformers, and abstract theorists, are all occupied in bringing man's powers into truer relations with each other. At least they profess to be engaged in this. No man but the robber or the satirist is professedly occupied in making human life discordant.

It is the fashion to say: "No doubt human thought and activity must be got to harmonize ; but this will come about of itself. Let us have no system, no general plan, no direct effort after unity. All will go well in the world, if everything is let alone. The only gospel is the gospel of absolute *laissez faire* ; there is a plenary inspiration and an all-sufficing revelation in *laissez aller*. Individual energy will at last shake down into working agreement."

This is a wide question ; and it can not be decided *a priori*, without actual study of the system propounded. If positivism,

after honest inquiry, be found to be really repressive of the spontaneous activity of every individual unit of the community, if it repeat the social oppressiveness of the old socialist and communist Utopias, if the harmony it offers be only a paper constitution, a narrow and inadequate miniature of a vast design, then assuredly positivism deserves to be rejected by every free spirit. It would be a toy, a parody of a great thing, a nuisance and an obstruction. But no man has a right to say this off-hand, without honest weighing of its nature and its aim.

A great deal of misconception has risen from the habit of assuming that Comte enacted as laws, to be imposed by force, a number of examples which he gave simply to illustrate his meaning. There is nothing about *force* in true positivism ; nor is there any attempt to crush individual energy and freedom.

To those who think there is something generous and profound in the monotonous formula, "No system," we say what is any kind of education, what is government, or philosophy ; what is general science itself ; what is morality ; what are any of the higher efforts of the human mind, whether of creative genius, of force of character—what are these but attempts, partial attempts no doubt, to bring into working harmony men's varied capacities and energies ? Civilization is made up of the more or less conscious efforts of men so to order their lives with a mutual understanding that they may lead to the smallest amount of waste, and the greatest amount of common purpose. It is but the frenzy of insurrection which has taken for its watchword, "Let everything go its own way"—when every rational effort of men about us in thought or in action, be it in the shape of advice or of law, springs from the wish that things should be got to go the right way and not the wrong way. Well, religion, with Comte, means the state in which the human faculties pull together, and all pull the right way.

I turn now to the second class of objectors, the theologians of any school, who mock at a religion without divinities, and ask us if the universal reign of law which we proclaim does not exclude the very conception of omnipotence and absolute goodness. I have said, we mean by positivism an organization of life, individual and social, and not the bare substitution of one object of adoration for another. We do not concern ourselves with the absolute and the infinite, or with first causes, or eternity, or transcendentials of any kind. We are not careful to answer men in this matter at all. We neither accept these notions nor deny them, nor disprove them,

nor denounce them, nor in any way concern ourselves about them. Those who choose to found man's life upon the infinite (i. e., the unintelligible), and upon the superhuman (i. e., the visionary, the vague, the unreal), these men will not trouble us, and we shall not trouble them. The right ordering of man's life is a thing too serious and vast to be decided by any off-hand appeal to rival sublimities.

When theologians say, "Have you any such sublime conception as God to give us?—what can you offer us for the eternities, and omnipotence, and absolute goodness that you take away?" common sense replies: We take away nothing. These things are slipping away in spite of you and without any act of ours. If after eighteen centuries of struggle—nay, twenty-eight or thirty-eight centuries of continually new adaptations—this eternity, and omnipotence, and absolute goodness, are wholly unable to organize the intellectual and practical life of man; if they shrink, generation after generation, into a smaller field of life and man's interests; if they be ever growing more distinctly disparate with human life, and can not be brought into line with science and industry, and what is called our worldly life at all; if the utmost that theology can do now is to attenuate itself to a pious wish, to urge deprecatingly and timidly that it is not *inconsistent* with science, not *incompatible* with worldly energy and every human delight in life—then we may say that theology is manifestly unable to deal with the problem. It is not enough to be a pious wish, a sublime abstraction. It is a miserable claim to be not inconsistent with science, not incompatible with energy and culture. The question is: Can theology vitalize, stimulate, coördinate science? Can it show the relation of science to human progress? Can it on the conception of law build up a religious attitude of mind far better than on the conception of arbitrary omnipotence? Can theology (with its vale of tears and its celestial crown) honestly direct the myriad efforts of human versatility to clothe human life with everything useful, ennobling, lovely? If it can not do any of these things, it is manifestly unable to be the supreme law of human life, for two out of three parts of human nature are entirely beyond its reach. It says (and it may say truly) its principle too is love. Yes! it is the love of God. But there it stops. It does not pretend to say that its *foundation* is *order* (i. e., positive knowledge of real things), still less can it say, its *end* is *progress*—physical, material, intellectual, as well as moral, progress. It can only ejaculate that its founda-

tion is a divine order, a thing ever shifting, vague, and purely hypothetical; its end is a transcendental progress to a supersensuous crown of glory. To positive science, to practical human improvement, it has nothing whatever to say, except "Set not your thoughts and affections on this world." In doing this, theology withdraws from human nature. It says to the heart, Worship, love, obey. To the intellect, to the character it has nothing to say at all, but a pious hope that they will both act to the honor and glory of God: and both put their own interpretation on that.

Theology, therefore, is not religion. It does not pretend to concentrate and harmonize human nature. It merely pretends to soften, console, and purify the heart. In the early stages of man's life it did more. There were once forms of theology which in their day very largely treated human nature as a whole, and in all its sides. When man knew very little, and led a very simple life, the conception of gods, or God, and the manifold apparatus of theology, really covered the greater part of his life, mental, practical, and emotional:

"He heard, borne on the wind, the articulate voice  
Of God, and angels to his sight appeared  
Crowning the glorious hills of paradise;  
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist  
Enkindled by the sun. He sate and talked  
With winged messengers, who daily brought  
To his small island in the ethereal deep  
Tidings of joy and love."

Time was, when, under the wing of the great theocracies, or under Moses and the prophets, in early Greece, and Rome, in mediæval Europe, or in the glory of Islam, and amid the first Bible saints, theology was practically coextensive with life. It really knit human nature into a whole, explained it to itself, and taught it its relations to the world around it. But if sublimity, and universality, and omnipotence are the mark of what we need, or the test of truth, then surely the God of Abraham and of Isaiah, the God of Moses and of David, the pantheon of Greece and Rome, the paradise of Dante, of St. Bernard, of Thomas à Kempis, show us something far more sublime. Their gods were far more almighty and omnipresent than the abstract, negative, hyper-ethereal deity of a modern cultured theologian, a being who can only be described by negations, and who is relegated far away from science, politics, industry, culture, beauty—far away from every human sphere but that of metaphysical meditation; who is too neutral to



conflict with science, too ethereal to be dragged into practical fact, too subjective to have any consistent part in controlling man's real life and external activity. No! it is not now, when, century after century, theology has been gradually withdrawing from the field of human nature, until it has reached almost the vanishing-point, now that its sole hope is in its very indefiniteness, and its sole justification that it does not meddle either with thought, or art, or practical activity, or social order, it is not now that we can listen to its claim that it is so sublime and universal; touching, though it may be, is yet its power over the heart as well as the imagination, and exquisite as are often the products of its saintlier lives. The sublimity, the purity, the saintliness of its ideal, and often of its fruits, we see them all—and we trust we may preserve them and make them our own. But our present business is far more than simply to find a sublime ideal, or even to get a conception of exquisite pathos, with power to humble and to console the heart. Our business is to bring religion once more to bear upon life and humanity, by finding that key of life which will correlate at once life and humanity in all their sides, after all the vast development they have had in modern ages. And this theology can not do, or at least does not do.

This same objection, it will be seen, applies equally to theology of every kind, under every one of its modern forms, from that of the sternest Bible Puritanism or that of the most mystical Catholic cloister to the flimsiest cloud-shadow of God which engages the fancy of the modern *littérateur* or metaphysician. These rationalized trinities, these residua and survivals of the bare old deisms, these “defecated” hypotheses of a possible divine abstraction, these indescribable “eternals that make for righteousness,” and all the other phrases by which clever men try to escape from the obvious difficulties they feel in saying God when they do not mean God—these are even less *religion* than are the orthodox theologies. The Unitarian formula which seeks to escape from logical contradictions by discarding the Athanasian Creed, the Neo-Christianity which seeks to escape from historical criticism by giving up the Bible as the word of God, and the scheme of redemption as the basis of its creed, these philosophical conundrums which try to save theology by veiling it in an impenetrable cloud-land—these have less to say to human nature, to thought, and energy, to modern science and industrial life, even than the Vatican itself, or Calvinism pure and simple.

The Vatican, it is true, offers nothing but the Syllabus for its mode of treating science and society. That we think is farcical enough. Calvinism ostentatiously declares that science and society are worldly, and therefore ungodly, and withdraws into its chamber to commune with its god. But it still finds its god commensurate with its own life, all stunted and distorted as that life is. Even these two have something to say about life—practical life, thought, conduct, happiness. But the bare deist, the rationalizing theist, the metaphysical dreamer about an hypothetical first cause, such as these are simply withdrawing from the field altogether. Their creed has nothing to say to man, and man's life, except what each man may find it in his own head or heart to say—which is a sort of religion as you like it. They fancy they are dexterously avoiding the difficulties, logical or historical. But, in avoiding difficulties, they are more and more surrendering the whole field of human nature, intellectual, practical, ay, and moral too, for their religion is refined down to a metaphysical puzzle. This is not religion at all. They make religion, in its flight, abandon the whole field of human nature, which it is the business of religion to transform and guide, which it once did transform and guide. They abandon it to those who have something to say about the reordering of human nature as a whole.

It is a verbal objection merely that what is without God is not religion. As a question of mere language, this objection is captious and unsound. The nature-worshippers, the sun- or fire-worshippers, Confucianism, Buddhism, have perfectly real religions, although they do not admit God. If we take the whole world and all ages, the religions which start from the idea of God have not embraced one tenth of the human beings whose religion has started from some other idea. A religion, in ordinary speech and in good sense, is any system which binds masses of men into common beliefs, stimulates them to common action, and softens their hearts in one worship. That body of ideas, by which a race of men are moved, which they believe as one man, and by which they live and die, is a religion always. It is a mere accident, whether this body of ideas includes the idea of God or not. Very often it does not.

## II.

Let us see what the problem really is. Every religion, every complete philosophy, and every systematic social polity, aims at making man's life more harmonious within, more complete in social

union, and in truer relation to the world around us. It is the fashion nowadays to say that religion explains the relation of man to the infinite, or of man to the universe, of man to the mysterious questions within him, or the immensity without him. But this is merely a modern, narrow, and perfectly artificial idea of religion. The religion of Moses, or of St. Paul, meant something far more than the relations of these individuals to the infinite, or their unexpressed and inexpressible yearnings after something mysterious. Religion then meant a comprehensive scheme of life and thought which made the man as a whole feel at rest, in health, in harmonious unison within him ; which knit bodies of men having the same belief into a common mode of thought, and life, and activity ; and, lastly, which laid down the rule of life as marked out by their human lot, and showed them the only path to sustained happiness. It thus did three things : It bound the human powers into a whole, and taught them to work as one ; it united men in masses of believers ; it imposed on them a rule of life. To harmonize the soul within, to draw men together, to regulate their whole lives, always was, and still is, the real business of religion. The idea that religion is concerned only with the infinite and undefined yearnings is a modern piece of sentiment.

The difficulty of the task lies in this complexity of human nature, its contrasted elements, and the overpowering limitations upon man's destiny imposed by the facts of nature. Man has instincts, appetites, emotions ; violent or languid, selfish or unselfish, animal or tender, common or sublime. Man has intellectual powers, ranging from the lowest cunning to the most lofty imagination. He has qualities of energy, prudence, perseverance, courage ; faculties that may make a hero, or may make a miser or a tyrant. Besides all this triple endowment of qualities, man is a social being, and his nature can only be developed by society with his fellows, and is deeply modified by that society. Lastly, this complex, modified, social being finds himself in a world of tremendous forces and boundless opportunities, where his whole energy sometimes can hardly sustain his life, which sometimes offers unlimited gratifications to his appetites, vast fields of conquest to his activity, perpetual pabulum for his inquiring thought. In this chaos of necessities, allurements, opportunities without, in this conflict of forces within man, what is to be the spring of his life ; which is to lead, which is to rule ; what is to be the end, the result of the whole ? To these questions all sorts of answers may be given, and have been given.

At the outset, the active, energetic powers had it all their own way, casually stimulated first by one passion, then by another. Man thought just enough to get his weapons or win his battles. On a large scale, too, some famous societies, both in the old world of war and in the modern world of industry, have appeared to be based on the dominant scheme of activity. But societies or men which are absorbed in the blind rage for practical achievement, be it in fighting, robbing, producing, or trading, are soon found to be unsound. They are seen to be turned into slaves of some ignoble appetite, and the force of society about them, or the facts of nature, bring them down and remind them that in headlong surrender to activity they were really the creatures of passion.

It has often been suggested that the dominant element in life should be sought for in some intellectual principle—in the search for truth, the superiority of knowledge, and the like. But, when we come to examine it, we find that the search for truth is not a motive power at all. Truth can tell us how to do a thing, but it can not impel us to do it. The motive source must be a feeling, or a desire. A profound knowledge of nature may be used either to enrich mankind or to commit assassination. Thought is neutral—it may act under an evil or an indifferent or a noble motive. It always acts under some impulse of the feelings, moral or immoral. Nor can thought command. The mind gives light; it does not give force. It is dispersive, and may exercise itself in the boundless fields of curiosity. By itself thought can neither concentrate man's life on a uniform purpose, nor sustain and stimulate him to enduring action. Lastly, it appears that the intellectual energy of the mass of mankind is far too moderate to constitute within them a principle of life. One in a thousand of us may really be capable of a life of intellectual effort. Nine hundred and ninety-nine make use of their intellects to serve their ends. How often beneath the show of a passion for intellectual engrossment do we find some refined egoism, some concealed vanity or ambition! The character which is given over to speculation is often a character of curious feebleness. A society which proclaims the supremacy of intellectual excitement is a society without steadiness, morality, dignity, or tenderness.

Therefore, since the harmonizing principle of life can not be permanently found either in the intellectual or the active powers, there remain only the moral on which we can found it. To which out of the various affections and appetites of man are we to turn?

Obviously not to the lower appetites, or the self-regarding passions ; violent, necessary even, and ever present, as some of them are. It is a contradiction in terms to say that any man was ever raised to a higher nature, or became a truer man, by means of consistent devotion to one of his lower appetites ; and it would be equally paradoxical to pretend that societies of men are civilized and united by the humanizing power of the gospel of selfishness. We may leave this singular form of religion to the more fanatical disciples of the doctrines of Plutonomy.

It is plain that the harmonizing principle must be found in the higher or unselfish instincts, in our feelings of attachment, of veneration, of goodness ; in those fine gifts of our nature which move us to devote ourselves to something outside us, to humble ourselves in awe before something that is greater than ourselves, to use our powers for good, for the benefit of our fellows and the common weal.

And thus it is that every religion, or social system of any kind, which was ever worthy of the name, has aimed at regulating human nature and organizing society by proclaiming as the principle of life the cultivation of some one or more of the great social feelings. They have used all sorts of devices, combinations, and forms. But priests, philosophers, moralists, and preachers of every creed have ever said : "Base your life upon a noble feeling, if you are to live aright ; base the state upon a generous devotion of its members to some great ideal, if it is to prosper and be strong." The old Hebrews placed it in submission to their tribal God, who represented to them the spirit of theocratic patriotism. The old Romans placed it in courageous devotion to the eternal destiny of Rome. The older Greeks placed it in the adornment of their lives and of their cities with every ennobling attitude and grace. Christ and St. Paul placed it in humility, charity, long-suffering, mercy, purity. Mohammed placed it in utter devotion of self to the will of an overruling Providence. The Catholic Church has found it in veneration for the divine beings, and the cultivation of every Christian grace. The Protestant Churches have found it in obedience to the written word of God, and the ever-present sense of saving the believer's soul by a life of love and faith. All of these systems conceived that they could harmonize life by placing it under the stimulus of a high, unselfish passion.

And they were all right so far. There *is* no other basis on which man's life can be knit and society ennobled but by conscious

devotion to some great cause represented by a dominant power. It was by virtue of this truth that these various societies exhibited such wonderful powers, and produced such memorable results. They were strong by means of it ; neither men nor races have been strong without it. This great truth lingers on even in the attenuated fragments which survive in the modern theologies and theistic philosophies. Powerless as they are to deal with contemporary thought and life, they still command respect and a clinging devotion from masses of men and women, and from some of the noblest spirits of our time, because in spite of their want of logic, force, humanity, or usefulness, they still do testify to the beauty of holiness, and the inspiring might of a lofty sense of devotion. Now, positivism declares that, come what may, this is the root of the matter. It holds with the theologies, with all the theologies, that the key of man and of life is, as they ever said, *love, veneration, devotion*.

Wherein, then, was their utter and portentous failure, if they were right in this main point? How is it that they have failed so strikingly, both to assimilate science and to moralize industry? Why is it that their power is exerted but fitfully and slightly over one corner alone of human nature, while the breach they have made with the rest of human nature grows wider and wider every day?

Obviously, it was because their spiritual elevation and devotion were not according to knowledge—not in correspondence with fact. Touching man's noblest feelings, they called on men to bow down to imaginary beings ; when men asked them for evidence of these beings and proof of their doings, the theologies could only answer, "Believe in faith!" They invented childish theories about the earth and our world and the facts of nature, and treated the intellect of man as if it were a slave. They talked about the arbitrary intervention of mysterious wills and deities, when science kept on showing us for ever new evidence of the reign of law through the world and a total elimination of all arbitrary providences. And when men came to act, to conquer this glorious earth and to organize their practical life in all the complications of modern material industry, the theologies of themselves could do nothing to civilize and moralize it. They could only ejaculate : "Lay not up for yourselves treasures where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." Well ! this is to outrage the intellect of

man, to trifle with our human energies ; and the fury with which the man of thought and the man of action have so long pursued the priest and his theology dates from that day when, in the name of man's noblest emotions, man was ordered to forswear his reason and his manhood, and, if he took these precepts in their literal sense, to debase himself, to become an idle, hysterical, ignorant mystic. Love, veneration, devotion—yes ! but everything turns on what or whom it is that we love, venerate, and devote ourselves to serve ; and how these feelings may be ranged with all we know, and may inspire all the work that we find to do in the world.

The more we look at it, the more we see that this cardinal error lies at the root of every kind of theology or metaphysical theosophy, whether it take the form of Catholicism or Protestantism, polytheism or Buddhism, spiritualism, deism, or pantheism. Whether you worship God, or the Virgin Mary, or the principle of good, or the *Anima Mundi*, or the “eternal that makes for righteousness” —if you concentrate the noblest sentiments of the human spirit on imaginary and superhuman objects, if you place the ideal of happiness and perfection in some supersensuous kind of bliss—you must place the whole of this influence that you call religion outside the human reason, which can only deal with the rational and the real, and outside the human energies which can only act in a human world. A superhuman creed may pretend to tell man his relations to the Infinite, and to prepare him for eternal bliss ; but what is wanted here is something to tell him his relations to the finite where he now is, and how he is to do his work honorably in this transitory but very urgent and very difficult bodily life on earth.

### III.

But how comes it that, if theology is so manifestly unable to perform its task, it has so long retained the hold it possesses ; how comes it that the forces that have driven it from point to point have never succeeded to its place ? For five centuries at least in Europe the struggle has been going on, and in every conflict theology has lost some ground. Over the whole field of physical science the reign of law has been steadily and for ever established. The heavens no longer declare the glory of God ; they declare the glory of Kepler, Galileo, Newton. Neither Jove nor Jehovah now manifests his anger in the thunder, nor rides upon the wings of the wind. The electric force now binds two continents together, and the law of storms is yielding up to us the secrets of the gods of heaven.

The famines, the diseases, and the revolutions which afflict mankind are no longer the judgments of God. They are the inevitable sequences of known and preventable conditions. Thus throughout the whole incalculable array of human discoveries, through the vast field of human industry and labor, there has stretched itself out a body of scientific laws and a wealth of practical achievement which are utterly incommensurable with theology of any kind. These two are for ever incompatible—as distinct from each other as a dream is distinct from a demonstration in geometry, as distinct as a fairy-tale is from the invention of the electric light. It is pretended, indeed, that theology may yet hold a place beside them. It is not so. The theology of Moses, of St. Bernard, of Milton, could not live beside them for an hour. If any theology can live within their light, it is the metaphysical puzzle of some ingenious academic logician. How comes it, then, that this grand scientific movement, which has routed theology in every battle, has failed to take its place in the world—can not yet win that loyalty and authority which have ever been given to religion?

Why, after all, what is it that these vast intellectual achievements can offer to mankind? Inexhaustible satisfaction to our thirst after knowledge; perpetual contrivances for making life richer; enchanting visions of yet brighter discoveries. But after that? Nothing but boundless fields of knowledge and fresh matter for investigation, and fresh appliances for life. But affection, veneration, devotion, what of these? What power do these sciences and appliances offer to tame the turbulent passions and weld the discordant nature; in the name of what mighty force do they claim man's veneration; to what service do they bid him to dedicate his life? They know nothing of these things. They offer him, indeed, a perpetuity of gratified curiosity, the service of pure, unalloyed truth, a noble wonder at the immensity and complexity of the All. I will not deny that there are poets and philosophers here and there, of rare and peculiar genius, whom this exclusive thirst for truth may lead to bright and useful lives. But what a mockery is this passion for truth to the mass of the men and women around us, if we tell them to make it the standard and master of their lives! Curiosity is a low and feeble motive to appeal to, if you seek to lift rude men and women out of the slough of their selfish passions; love of knowledge is a fine thing, but does it prompt men to succor the miserable and protect the weak? Truth is sacred, but will truth make men generous, just, and tender, better fathers and hus-



bands, truer friends, braver citizens, more humane men? Wonder is often a healthy state of mind; but will an eternity of wonder at the material world around us fill us with gratitude, veneration, and resignation, such as the Mussulman, or Catholic, or Protestant felt, and may still feel, for his living providence?

Here, then, for centuries there has been waged the secular conflict between positive science on the one side and theology on the other—free thought and free life against a supreme faith and an exalted spirit of devotion. It has long seemed an insoluble dilemma. Each has something that the other can not destroy. Each has something that the world will not accept; each wants something that the world will not forego. In spite of all the priests of all the creeds, mankind will not consent to surrender one jot of their mind's freedom; nor can all the preachers of a thousand sects persuade them to give up their interest in this earthly life. The intellect shall be free; and men will care to live in this world and not in any other. On the other hand, in spite of science, men will not rest in peace until they have a faith; they can not consent to forego a religious sense of duty and reverence. How long is this battle to be fought? Is the dilemma for ever insoluble?

#### IV.

Positivism professes to be the answer to this momentous problem. The key-note of that answer is as follows: There must be both science and devotion, and the two must occupy the *same* field and be concentrated on the same object. Science alone, theology alone, make a lame and one-sided scheme of life, for neither is religion; neither gives a unity; and the two are incapable of ever coinciding in one. So long as science is occupied with the physical facts around us, it is impossible to say that science can present us a religious basis of life. So long as faith is supposed to be something opposed to knowledge, it is impossible to say that faith can inspire any rational mind. But the great intellectual fact of our generation is this—that science has extended its domain to the science of man. Social things have now been brought, like physical things, within the realm of law. The science of society—or sociology—has arisen. It is the unique and resplendent achievement of Auguste Comte. No rational thinker now denies that the whole world of human activity, of intellectual and moral powers, are, like the facts of nature, capable of scientific treatment. History, the origin and development of civilization, the economy of our social life, the

secret springs of our moral life, the laws of our intellectual life, are all reduced to a science ; less exact than our knowledge of the solar system, but equally real and far more complex. That which of old time was known as science—the laws of man's physical sphere, or of his physical frame—is become but the prologue and antechamber of science. The great science, the sacred science, the crown and summary of all science, is the science of man.

And now this new science unfolds to us an issue out of the dilemma. It reveals to us the laws of a force toward which we can feel the highest sense of sympathy, to whose service we can devote ourselves, whose mighty power over us we can not gainsay, while we must accept it with love and reverence. That force is the vast and overwhelming consensus of all human lives, the complex movement through the ages of human civilization and thought. Before this crucial discovery of human intelligence it was impossible to feel that the truths of science and our noblest sympathies had a common object or field. One might wonder at the firmament of stars and delight in our study of the planets ; but it was idle to love the planets, or to feel ourselves inspired by the milky way. It was marvelous to track the secrets of electricity, or the analysis of gases ; but the lives of men and women were never ordered by profound affection for electricity or gas. The study of all the forms of life upon the earth enlarged our minds, and the physiology of the human frame showed us how fearfully and wonderfully we are made ; but no man could love the vegetable or animal kingdoms as a whole. Nay, anatomy, or even vivisection itself, were not found altogether conducive to a reverential and sympathetic state of mind.

But when we passed into social science and found how all the other sciences had their issue and meaning in the science of man, when we found how they all served as the instruments and materials for the glorious human fabric, when we learned how the long succession of ages had developed man's mind and powers, how civilization was advancing with sure and widening progress, how the efforts of the human race stood round each of us from the cradle to the grave, how the thoughts of the wise, and the works of heroes, and the influence of every noble life, made us what we are—then we felt at last that the realm of law was become the realm of love. There was now a human providence which watched over us, taught us, guided us, ruled us ; there was a supreme power which we might serve, but which we could not contend with ; there was a cause to which to devote our lives and which could inspire all the warmth of

our souls. That cause was the onward march of the human race, and its continual rising to a better mode of life.

Thus, then, science at last has brought us to the feet of a power for which we can feel all those emotions of love, veneration, and devotion that have been so long lavished upon the creations of our fancy or our fear. Man can again become a religious being, for the deepest principle of his nature is again the service of a power for good above him. But observe the vast difference in the new form that religion has taken. This power for good is real, provable, human. It is entirely within the sphere of the intellect, and is manifested by the efforts of the intellect. The intellect is no longer the slave, or the foe, of the devotional ardor. It is its helpmate, its guide, and instructor. The new power is not a transcendental ideal which drags man away from his life on earth. It is as human as himself ; it offers not the ideal of one Christ, but the reality of all the Christs ; one with us, tried as we are, suffering as we are, bound by the same laws of matter, and united by the same conditions. It is not, indeed, eternal, almighty, omniscient, perfect—that is to say, it is not unintelligible, unreal, unhuman. If it were these things it would stand apart from our intellects, and be indifferent to the best of our practical energies. But, relatively to us, it is perpetual, mighty, provident, benevolent. So that, if religion, at first sight, seem in its new form to have lost something in sublimity and intensity, it has gained everything in reality, in comprehensiveness, in usefulness, in humanity.

It is just because the new object of our highest reverence is brought down from heaven to earth, is brought within the range of our human powers, that it gives such a mighty stimulus to our reason, to our energies, to our zeal for every kind of good. An infinite Trinity, or an infinite Godhead, is indeed incomprehensible, is above our intellect ; does not need our thoughts ; can not be tracked out by finite minds. An almighty Creator does not need our efforts ; there is no work of his that we can really do, for his all-seeing providence can baffle everything we attempt. He needs not our well-doing, for he is beyond all service and all good. We are to give him nothing but praises : we may show our virtue by benevolence ; but virtue is not devoutness. “When we have done all that is commanded of us, we must say, ‘We are unprofitable servants.’” Silent adoration is all we can really give. “Thou art necessary to me,” says the Catholic mystic to his God. “I am not necessary to thee !” In every way that we turn it, an absolute per-

fection paralyzes our reason, unmans our energies, refines away even active goodness into a mere ecstatic prayer. Monks and nuns are logically consistent with their creed.

But the power of humanity calls up every fiber of our brains to understand its organism, to learn its forces, and to know its difficulties. We are all necessary to humanity, for we are a part of it ; it needs every faculty of our natures ; not a stroke of our true work is lost to it ; not one of our human offerings is valueless ; every good word, and act, and gentle touch has its fruit and serves our kind ; every smile that we shed upon a child is an act of devotion to our human providence.

And yet let us beware of thinking that all this is bounded and ended by a vague humanitarianism. If religion meant simply that men and women would be saved by trusting to indefinite progress, by relying on general goodness, and uttering encomiums on human dignity, religion would lead to some extraordinary types of character, and would end in as little as so many kinds of vague worship and hope. On the contrary, humanity, we say, is placed in a hard world, and has a world of hard work before it. There are mountains of things to be learned, of things to be done, of things to be practiced. All round the human race stand the hard forces of matter, and the difficult and complicated facts of science. Society can not be touched without knowledge ; and the knowledge of the social organization of humanity is a vast and perplexing science. The race, like every one of us, is dependent on the laws of life, and the study of life is a mighty field to master. But life has its conditions in inert matter, of which chemical and physical laws give us the fixed and subtle limits. Lastly, our whole existence is dependent on the laws of the solar system wherein we dwell.

This vast array of law thus forms the condition and basis of human life ; and we can only live rightly in so far as we live in accordance with it. Thus knowledge—knowledge of the laws mathematical, astronomical, chemical, physical, biologic, social, moral—becomes for us not only compatible with religion but essential to religion, a part of religion, its foundation and creed. To oppose or contrast science and religion would be, for a positivist, as irrational as it would be in a Christian to oppose the creeds and the gospels to Christianity. With us science is religion, so far that it is the intellectual aspect of religion. And thus with us the first part of a religious training is a sound and rational education. The beginning of all service of humanity is the knowledge of the laws of the world

which surrounds it, of the laws of its own nature. Enthusiasm for humanity, worship of humanity, would be shallow sentiment or rank hypocrisy, if it did not imply unwearying efforts to know the power we pretend to serve, to master those laws which reveal to us its destiny, and to carry that knowledge into act.

Not that this knowledge can ever remain a dry intellectual attainment. Religion, as Comte has said, consists of three parts—a belief, a worship, and a rule of life—of which all three are equal, and each as necessary as any other. To make religion consist in knowledge only would be to make it end in scientific curiosity. To make it consist in worship only would make it end in affectation and sentimentality. To make it consist in a rule of life alone would be to make it end in pharisaism. True religion is the combination of belief, worship, discipline. Humanity demands from us the best of our brains, of our hearts, of our conduct.

It were idle to pretend to sketch in these few pages any one of these three parts of religion. The scheme of positivism is not like some faiths which can be stated in a phrase, and accepted in a passion of emotion. It might make way more rapidly, but it would not be the solid thing it is, if it could be adopted by an exclamation, "I believe," if believers could be added by thousands after listening to a psalm, if it could be understood without a mass of labor. It would be an imposture if it presumed to explain the entire relations of life without an immense body of arguments, facts, and principles. It is the business of the great works of Comte to unfold and connect these principles.

FREDERIC HARRISON.